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LITERATURE AND LITERACY IN ANCIENT GREECE

J. A. DAVISON

LE BUT de toute culture littéraire, c'est d'apprendre à lire."¹ The purpose of these articles, which are based on lectures given in the School of Graduate Studies of the University of Toronto in November 1959, is to consider certain aspects of the process by which the Greeks attained to the aim of literary culture as defined in the words quoted in my first sentence. It is, in my opinion, essential that this process should be understood, at least in its main outlines, by all who concern themselves with the interpretation of Greek literary texts, for only so can one have a reasonable basis for estimating the reliability of the information now available to us about the content of those texts; from my own point of view the understanding of the relationships of Greek authors to their public on the one hand and to their material on the other is an important factor in the social and economic history of Greek literature and of the Greek people. I must acknowledge at the outset that I am interested in answering two questions: "What makes authors tick?" and "How do authors eat?"

My interest in the social side of Greek history goes back to the day when I received as a school prize a copy of Mahaffy's *Social Life in Greece*; but the second question did not begin to seem important to me until, somewhat later, I first read P. G. Wodehouse's story, "The Man who Gave Up Smoking." In this the title role is played by one Ignatius Mulliner, "a portrait painter of steadily growing reputation" engaged to Hermione Rossiter.

For some time past, by hints dropped and tentative remarks thrown out, he had been made aware that Mrs Rossiter greatly desired him to paint her daughter's portrait: and until now he had always turned to these remarks and hints a deaf ear. Mrs Rossiter's mother's heart, he knew, wanted to get the portrait for nothing: and while love is love and all that, he had *the artist's dislike for not collecting all that was coming to him*. Ignatius Mulliner, the man, might entertain the idea of pleasing the girl he worshipped by painting her on the nod, but *Ignatius Mulliner, the artist, had his schedule of prices* [*Mr Mulliner Speaking*, 52; my italics].

This revelation (for to my then somewhat unsophisticated mind it was nothing less) that artists may be as businesslike as shopkeepers, was given relevance for literary artists by Pindar's references to money-grubbing by poets (not to mention the stories which the scholiasts have indiscreetly preserved for us about Pindar's own charges), by Dr. John-

¹Ascribed to Jacques Chardonne: F. Martinazzoli, *Sapphica et Vergiliana* (Bari 1958) 143.

son's remarks about patrons and publishers, and perhaps most of all by Trollope's unblushing avowals in his *Autobiography*. Consequently, when (through no fault of my own except a reluctance to refuse any commission which I felt myself capable of discharging) I found myself, on my release from the Army in 1945, plunged into the maelstrom of Homeric criticism, it was not long before I realized the fundamental importance in these inquiries of determining, if one could, what were the social influences which might produce a poem like the *Iliad*, and how such a poem once produced could have been preserved for posterity.

For this inquiry I found that most of the standard works on Homeric criticism gave very little help. On the one side, the "unitarians" seemed to me not to have realized the difficulties involved in the assumption that the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* were originally composed in substantially the form in which we now read them; and on the other, the "analyticals" seemed for the most part to imagine that the process of getting a book "published" was very much the same in the archaic period of Greek history as it is in the twentieth century (some of them even showed signs of believing that authors were subject to very much the same external and internal tabus as prevail in the publishing world to-day). It was not long, however, before I found my way to a long paper in *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* entitled "Studies in the Epic Technique of Oral Verse-making" (41 [1930] 72-147; 43 [1932] 1-50) by Milman Parry; and it is only just that I should make it clear at once that, although I do not accept all the conclusions which students of comparative literature have drawn from Parry's observations, my own attitude to these problems has been decisively affected by the work of Parry and his successors.²

The first thing which, I think, everyone who is concerned with the study of literature ought to bear in mind is that for many (perhaps for most) people, even to-day, reading in the full sense ("the adequate use of a book," Trollope calls it in a passage to be quoted below) is a difficult business. Even among those who are willing to use their imagination to picture the persons, actions, and thoughts described, there are many who would rather listen than read (hence the popularity in Victorian days of reading aloud, and in our own day of the serial adaptations of nineteenth-century novels broadcast by the BBC); and those whose imagination is less active may prefer to watch as well as listen (hence the popularity of "the film of the book" and of stage or television adaptations of well-known novels). And yet in Western countries to-day the literacy rate is as high as it has ever been in history, and books are as easy to come by as they have ever been—and much easier to come by than they could ever be before the invention of printing from moveable types.

²Notably Dr. A. B. Lord of Harvard and Professor J. A. Notopoulos of Trinity College, Hartford; cf. my article in *Gymnasium* 61 (1954) 28-36 and reviews in *CR* n.s.6 (1956) 205-206, *AJP* 82 (1961) 441-445.

So when we move back in time to the ancient world we may reasonably expect to find many people who, for the practical purposes of daily life, are fully literate, but who are yet "not great readers"; and the proportion of readers to literates may be expected to decrease as we travel backwards towards the point at which literacy begins. This is, in fact, just what we do find in the Graeco-Roman world; although the Greek alphabet was demonstrably in use from the latter part of the eighth century B.C. onwards, the first evidence for the sort of fully developed literacy which expresses itself in the practice of reading as a pastime appears (so far at least as our evidence goes) in the last quarter of the fifth century; and evidence for the existence of a book trade is first found at about the same time. Of course, this is not to say that no books at all existed before the development of a book trade in Greece; poets, prophets, schoolmasters, and philosophers all needed some books for professional purposes, and there is evidence for authors' own manuscripts, for occasional "complimentary" copies, and even for one officially preserved and protected book from the sixth century. All this evidence is explicit and unambiguous; if we admit also circumstantial and inferential evidence, I think that we should be justified in claiming that the use of writing for the recording of works of literature (though not for their public dissemination) goes back well into the eighth century, or in other words that the practice of writing down works of literature began soon after the coming of the alphabet. Nevertheless, I believe that we shall see good reason for thinking that not even the coming of books as an article of commerce and private collection seriously altered the general preference of Graeco-Roman society for gaining acquaintance with works of literature through the ear—how else are we to account for the continued popularity in Juvenal's time and long after of the *recitatio*?

I. DAUGHTERS OF MEMORY

It is clear from the discovery of documents written in the Linear B script at Pylos, Mycenae, and other Late Bronze Age sites in mainland Greece that some people in those places were for practical purposes literate by the late thirteenth century B.C.; and it may reasonably be presumed that the *πίναξ πυκτός* containing *θυμόφθορα πολλά* given to Bellerophontes by Proetus for delivery to the king of Lycia (*Iliad* 6.168–170) is a reminiscence either of Linear B or of one of the other scripts current in the Aegean area in the second half of the second millennium B.C. (Bellerophontes, by Glaucus' account, must be supposed to have lived about a century before the Achaean attack on Ilios). It is to be noted, however, that Bellerophontes himself must be presumed to have been illiterate; even if the *πίναξ* was sealed, Proetus could hardly

suppose that Bellerophontes, whom he suspected of making improper advances to the queen Anteia, would be likely to leave a mere seal inviolate—and this corresponds with the general picture which Homer presents of Achaean society towards the end of the Bronze Age: though he shows us many glimpses (and even some full-length pictures) of a society interested in what we are bound to call literature, we do not meet a single person of whom we might even suspect that he or she was literate at all. What we see is a society in which all communication is purely oral, and that society is described for us in a literature which, as the work of Milman Parry and his successors has shown, is composed in a language which was clearly intended for oral delivery to audiences which were accustomed to use their ears and their memories.

As a guide to the types of literature known to Homer, or supposed by him to have been known to the society which he describes, the *Iliad* is (surprisingly enough) richer than the *Odyssey*, though the *Odyssey* is more informative about the literary craft or profession. The *Iliad* (at any rate in Book 9) knows of τῶν πρόσθεν . . . κλέα ἀνδρῶν ἡρώων (524–525), which can be referred to by Phoenix “to point a moral” or sung to the φόρμιγξ (as by Achilles, 186–189) to entertain oneself and others (though I suspect that Patroclus did not much enjoy listening to Achilles’ vocal exertions) in hours of idleness. Narratives which may well have formed the subject of κλέα ἀνδρῶν such as that of Meleager are frequently used in the *Iliad*, whether by the author or by his characters, “to adorn a tale” (one may think of Nestor on his own prowess, of Diomedes on his father, of Glaucus on his ancestors); and Helen knows very well that the real reason for “the evil fate” which “Zeus has set” upon Alexander and herself is that “even hereafter we may be a theme of song for men that are to be” (*Iliad* 6.356–358). Whether Achilles improvised his own κλέα, or simply repeated songs which he had learned by heart, we cannot tell; but that the best professionals were true improvisers we shall learn when we turn to the *Odyssey*. Professional αἰδοί, however, make little appearance in the *Iliad*: Thamyris the Thracian was obviously one, but he appears only in a digression (2.596–600); there is at least one αἰδός on the Shield (18.604; others may be assumed in 495), and there are the αἰδοί who act as θρήνων ἐξαρχοί at the burial of Hector (24.720–722). Types of song mentioned in the *Iliad* include the παίγων, sung either to propitiate Apollo (as in 1.473) or in triumph after the killing of Hector (22.391), the ὑμέναιος (18.493) and the λῖνος (18.570). Improvisation is not excluded in any of these cases, although where μολπῇ or ὀρχηστὺς or both are mentioned, and where an αὐλός accompaniment or choral singing is involved, one must suppose that there was some degree of previous organization; there must at least have been a familiar tune.

The *Odyssey* does not mention any type of song except κλέα ἀνδρῶν by name, though the opening of Book 4 implies some kind of marriage song (an αἰιδός and two tumblers are involved—17–19; the use of the words μολπή and ἐξάρχειν suggest dancing, and perhaps choral singing as well); in addition to a considerable selection of κλέα ἀνδρῶν, it mentions singing accompanying two ball dances (Nausicaa's in 6.100 ff. and the more formal one in 8.370–380), and Demodocus' set piece, *Ares and Aphrodite* (8.266–366). In this last case we are, I think, justified in supposing that the elaborate preparations described in 8.258–265, in which everyone seems to know his place and task, and the very nature of the performance (lyric narrative with ballet accompaniment) imply a considerable amount of previous arrangement and a known text; there is no place here for improvisation, even if (as seems likely from 8.264–265) Odysseus had never seen anything like it before. Something like a fixed text must also be implied, I think, by the appeals to the Muses prefixed to passages containing detailed information, and especially by the elaborate proem to the Catalogue of Ships in *Iliad* 2.484–493. Even in the more obviously improvised narratives recited by αἰιδοί in the *Odyssey*, such as Phemius' on the 'Ἀχαιῶν νόστον . . . λυγρόν (1.325–326) or those of Demodocus on the 'Ἀχαιῶν οἶτον (8.489), especially those about the quarrel of Achilles and Odysseus (8.73–82) and about the wooden horse (8.499–520), there are certain limits to the improvisation: firstly, the bard (especially when he chooses the newest, and therefore most popular, subjects) is in danger of finding that his audience contains one of the chief actors in the events which he describes—and in those circumstances he will naturally wish to earn such a testimonial to his accuracy as that bestowed by Odysseus on Demodocus (8.489–491); secondly, his κλέα ἀνδρῶν are now grouped in οἶμαι (perhaps we may translate the word by “cycles”), and these are certainly not improvised—they are taught to the φύλον αἰιδῶν by the Muse (8.481–482; cf. 22.347–348), who loves them.

Thus the Muses appear in Homer as the guardians of factual tradition, the divine record office as it were to which the poet can appeal for information on matters outside his own knowledge; they are the daughters of Zeus, the chief source of inspiration (cf. *Odyssey* 8.488), and though Homer does not mention their mother by name, their function makes it clear that for Homer, as for Hesiod (*Theog.* 53–54), they must be the children of Memory too. *Materia appetit formam, ut uirum femina*: Memory provides the *materia*, and the *forma* is given by inspiration (Zeus); thus the Muses, as the offspring begotten upon memory by inspiration, may be taken to symbolize existing poems.³ The function of memory in an illiterate or sub-literate society is two-fold: as Marrou has

³So Pindar (*Pyth.* 4.3, for example) addresses the poem which is to be produced in Cyrene as Μοῖσα.

pointed out (*Histoire de l'Education dans l'Antiquité*⁴ [Paris 1958] 275) it may act as a valuable support for improvisation (and anyone who wishes to see to what extent the author of the *Iliad* was dependent on memory for the words in which he clothed his new versions of traditional stories may do so painlessly by consulting the sixth chapter of Professor D. L. Page's *History and the Homeric Iliad* [Berkeley 1959]); or it may enable its possessor to preserve accurately whole compositions either of his own or of others—this latter function is well illustrated in Sir Arthur Grimble's descriptions of the skill of illiterate (but not uneducated) Gilbert Islanders (see his *A Pattern of Islands* [London 1952] 42 and 57; *Return to the Islands* [London 1957] 200). No one, I think, who reads these, and compares them with recorded feats of memory by literate persons, such as the late Lord Macaulay⁴ or (perhaps more relevantly) Niceratus in Xenophon's *Symposium* (4.5–6), will doubt either that it would have been possible for a Demodocus to compose and rehearse an *Ares and Aphrodite* "without book" or for a trained reciter to memorize and reproduce the whole of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey* just as they were composed. But alas! for the transmission of poetical texts, not all the Muses were as honest as she who visited Demodocus; Hesiod's Muses put the telling of lies like to truth⁵ first among the things which they know, and only tell true tales when they feel like it (*Theog.* 27–28). It is evident that the *Theogony* itself must be one of the truthful tales (at least Hesiod must be understood to claim so), but I am inclined to think that Hesiod considered such works as the Homeric poems to be evidence for the *δολία ἀπατά* of which he regards his own Muses as being capable. There are obviously degrees of poetical truth; it is likely that a puritan like Hesiod would find it less easy than Aristotle does to accept the idea that for literary truth it suffices to paint a scene *οἷα ἂν γένοιτο*, and to obtain this lifelike effect by the use of directly reported dialogue which the poet cannot himself have heard. (It has been observed by Miss Sheila Kaye-Smith⁶ that Lady Russell in *Persuasion* has a peculiarly flat appearance because she is hardly ever allowed to speak for herself; and any reader of Boswell's *Life of Johnson* can see the difference between direct and indirect speech as a producer of liveliness.)⁷ I feel sure that Hesiod, if faced by Homer in real life (and not in the somewhat formal atmosphere

⁴Sir G. O. Trevelyan, *The Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay* (Oxford 1961) 1.48–50, 123; 2.371–373.

⁵The example of Odysseus will serve to remind us that fiction dare not be so strange as truth; his false stories are much better evidence for the realities of daily life in the heroic world than are his actual adventures.

⁶*Speaking of Jane Austen* (New York 1944) 197–198.

⁷Though Johnson himself was a master of the lively use of reported speech, cf. the superb example quoted by Mary Lascelles, *Jane Austen and her Art* (Oxford 1939) 109–110.

of the *Certamen*) would have fastened on the speeches and demanded to be informed how Homer knew what words Achilles and Calchas and the rest actually used in the debate reported in *Iliad* Book 1. (This is a more ticklish question even than it looks, because there is reason to suspect that Homer's whole account of the quarrel which began the fatal *μῆνις* is his own invention; Demodocus in the *Odyssey*—8.73–82—speaks of quite a different quarrel, and one which is excluded by the whole tone of the *Iliad*.)

But with Hesiod we have already arrived in what we may with propriety call the "proto-literate" period: the *Theogony* may be oral poetry, just as the Catalogue of Ships may be if we accept Page's arguments (*History and the Homeric Iliad*, Ch. IV), but it is difficult to accept the *Works and Days* as a purely oral composition—there is no reason to suppose that the poem was composed before the alphabet had come into fairly general use, and we may point to the evidence (the existence of which is admitted by even so stalwart a defender of Homer's illiteracy as Professor E. R. Dodds) of "declining oral technique" in the Homeric poems as good reason for thinking that a knowledge of the alphabet was already exerting its influence on the author of the *Iliad* (and *a fortiori* on the composer of the *Odyssey*). Therefore we must now turn to the question of writing, with the coming of which a new period in the history of literary transmission opens.

It is, I think, hopeless to try to maintain that knowledge of the Linear B script persisted in Greece proper from the end of the Mycenaean period down to the coming of the alphabet in the eighth century;⁸ one has only to ask for the evidence, of which not a scrap is forthcoming (not so much as one symbol painted or scratched on a Sub-Mycenaean or Proto-geometric pot). If there was verbal communication between the Mycenaean and the Geometric periods (and there seems little doubt of it), we can safely rely on its having been through memory and oral transmission—and that, after all, was how for the great mass of the Greek people literary communication continued for generations, even after the coming of writing and its general adoption for official and business purposes. Whatever authors did to record their works for posterity, the public for whom they composed those works obtained knowledge of them through the ear, at the great festivals like that at Delos described by the author of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, at school (where even the master might well not have a book), or in off-hours in the market-place, if some itinerant reciter should turn up to give a performance, after the manner of Phemius when the suitors found him and carried him off by force to

⁸This was done by A. J. B. Wace, in his Foreword to M. Ventris and J. Chadwick, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek* (Cambridge 1956) xxix–xxx; but his suggestion has not, to my knowledge, been accepted by any serious worker in the field.

sing for them.⁹ This aspect of the subject will have to be discussed in more detail later in this paper; it is more important at this point to consider the impact of alphabetic writing on the professional authors. I assume that the alphabet was introduced into Greece during the first half of the eighth century,¹⁰ and that by the middle of the century it had attained to such a degree of general recognition that it was worth using it as a means of recording information which people thought worthy of preservation (such perhaps as the names of Olympic victors; it may be that the festival was founded, or drastically reorganized, in 776 and that victors' names were recorded from then on,¹¹ or it may be that when writing was first introduced they recorded all the victors' names which could be remembered, and took the festival to have been founded in the earliest year for which they could find a victor). I take it also that the earliest literary works of which actual words survive to-day enjoy that (at times dubious) advantage because they were written down by someone not long after the coming of alphabetic writing. Some of this work may have been done in temples: Eumelus' processional ode for the Messenians *εἰς Δῆλον* may owe its very partial survival (two lines preserved by Pausanias, 4.33.2) to a collection of Delian hymns like that in which Herodotus saw the hymns of Olen (Her. 4.35.3), but I think that most of it must be put down to people in close connection with the author—and this is probably valid for Eumelus too, since we are told of other poems by him (and some actual words from those poems will be found in Kinkel, *Epicorum Graecorum Fragmenta*). However that may be, Eumelus is the first Greek author whose date we have some reason to feel sure about: he is said to have been a contemporary of Archias, the founder of Syracuse (Clem. Alex. *Strom.* 1.21.131.8 Stählin-Früchtel), and his poem for the Messenians (which was probably in hexameters)¹² should antedate the loss of Messenian independence in the last quarter

⁹In my original lectures, I included at this point a reference to Ernest Bramah's picture of the itinerant story-teller's life given in his *Kai Lung* stories—a good case of fiction which, however untrue to the realities of Chinese life it may be, is certainly a lifelike picture of the existence of wandering *αοιδοί*.

¹⁰I leave these words as they were written in 1959; see now Miss L. H. Jeffery's *The Local Scripts of Archaic Greece* (Oxford 1961), especially 21: "On the present evidence we might infer that the date of birth of the alphabet was somewhere about the middle of the eighth century." It is hardly fair of S. Dow (*CW* 55 [1961/2] 88) to claim that Miss Jeffery supports a date of about 725.

¹¹For a possible example of this consider the official record of citharoedic victors at the great Panathenaea, which appears to have begun about 446 (see my article in *JHS* 78 [1958] 41).

¹²The poem is *ex hypothesi* pre-Alcmanic, and lyric poems of pre-Alcmanic date are stated to have been in hexameters; see Suidas, s.v. 'Αλκμάν, and my "Notes on Alcman" (*Proceedings of the Ninth International Papyrological Congress* [Oslo 1958, publ. 1961/2] 38-39).

of the eighth century. We have no valid reason for believing that any surviving work of Greek literature in anything like the form in which we know it is much (if at all) older than the traditional date (734) for the foundation of Syracuse; we do not know how Herodotus arrived at his idea that Homer and Hesiod had lived about 400 years before his own time (2.53.2)—he presumably calculated by generations, which would leave a considerable margin for error—and a date in the ninth century for the Hesiodic works known to us can only be called wildly improbable; the difficulty of determining how much of the “Homeric” poems known to Herodotus he was prepared to attribute to Homer himself prevents us from being dogmatic about the date of Herodotus’ Homer, but it is hard to believe that the *Iliad* can have taken anything like its present form much before 750 or at all after 700. Such a dating would suit very well with a suggestion that the author of the *Iliad* either wrote the poem down himself or had it put into writing by an amanuensis; the poet himself may have been too old to have acquired that familiarity with writing which would come from having practised it from childhood, but there may well have been younger men about him (the first generation of the *Homeridae*, perhaps) who had no more recollection of a time when men could not read and write than my pupils have of a time when men could not listen to wireless broadcasts, or than I have of a time when men could not go to the cinema or fly in heavier-than-air machines. For such men it would be natural to put into writing a work which they must have recognized as a masterpiece, so that it could be preserved unaltered.¹³

It ought however to be noticed that we have not yet reached the stage where writing a book of your own or copying out another’s oral poetry is to be equated with preparing it for publication. Quite apart from the manifestly publicistic purpose of Hesiod in his addresses to his brother in the first part of the *Works and Days*, we may confidently adduce the example of seventh- and early sixth-century elegiac and iambic poetry. Look above all at Archilochus. It would not be strictly relevant here to enter into the controversy which, in my opinion, ought to exist at the moment about his exact dates,¹⁴ it suffices for the immediate purpose that

¹³The point about Homer and writing has been discussed by A. B. Lord, *TAPA* 84 (1953) 124 ff. and *The Singer of Tales* (Cambridge, Mass. 1960) 148 ff.; by C. M. Bowra, *Homer and his Forerunners* (Edinburgh 1955); and by A. Lesky “Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit im homerischen Epos,” (*Festschrift für D. Kralik* [Vienna 1954] 1–9).

¹⁴The conventional account of the death of Gyges at the hands of the Cimmerians puts that event in 652, a good deal later than the date implied by the regnal years given by Herodotus; since Archilochus mentions Gyges as an example of prosperity he must have written during Gyges’ reign—hence if Gyges is put too late Archilochus must follow him. This needs clearing up by someone who does not wear ready-coloured spectacles. Cf. my “Notes on Alcman” (above, note 12) 34, note 2.

he wrote in the first half of the seventh century. Whereas Hesiod's aim is to reform the world as well as his brother and to bring about a new era of justice and reconciliation, Archilochus's aim is revenge, the humiliation of the proud aristocrats who have slighted him, and this can be had only if his poems are "public"—if he can get up on a soap-box in the marketplace and declaim them to a crowd of listening, encouraging, and (above all) remembering fellow-citizens. His poems may apostrophize individuals, Lycambes, Neobule, Pericles, Glaucus, and the rest; but what he really wants is that his words may "fly living through the mouths of men" (men such as Charon the carpenter in whose mouth he has put four of his best known lines—fr. 22 Diehl). Perhaps he scratched his verses on walls, for running Thasians or Parians to read; but I think that we must picture him rather in the guise of Amanda, the Postmistress General in Shaw's *The Apple Cart*:

I didnt argue. I mimicked him. I took all the highfalutin passages in his speech, and repeated them in his best manner until I had the whole five thousand laughing at him. Then I asked them would they like me to sing; and their Yes nearly lifted the roof off. I had two songs. They both had choruses. One went "She lets me go out on Saturday night, on Saturday night, on Saturday night"—like that. The other went "Boo! Hoo! I want Amanda's Teddy bear to play with." They sang it under the windows of his hotel the next time he came. He cancelled his meeting and left. [*Complete Plays* (London 1931) 1028]

After that I do not think that it will be too hard for us, with the recent example of Cyprus still all too vividly before our mind's eye, to imagine the influence which Archilochus' "keen iambs, egad!" (and still more perhaps his trochaic tetrameters) might have in working Greek islanders up to the point of bloodshed. But there is still something to be remembered: an Amanda's songs would no doubt perish before long (or survive only among children, whose tribal memories are longer than anyone could believe who had not read such works as Iona and Peter Opie's *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* [Oxford 1959]), whereas Archilochus' songs in due time became part of the rhapsodes' repertoire (as did those of Homer and Hesiod),¹⁵ and some of them at least (as we can tell from the papyri) survived to the end of antiquity. One of Archilochus' contemporaries, therefore, thought his poems worth preserving, and I think we may depend pretty heavily on that contemporary having been the poet himself: once they were in writing an authentic text could descend to posterity, although the precise agency cannot be determined (it is unlikely that the rhapsodes would preserve the whole *corpus*). Later on, as the inscriptions show, there was a shrine to Archilochus on Paros (F. Lasserre, *Archiloque: Fragments* [Paris 1958] lxxviii–lxxxiii; Testimonia 11a, 12, 31), and this may have played a part in the preservation of copies of his works.

¹⁵Plato *Ion* 531 a.

The view that I am putting forward, then, may be summed up as follows: the coming of the alphabet to Greece led within a generation to a considerable outburst of activity among those literary men who had grasped the value of the new technique as a means of preserving literary works independently of the not always available (or, if available, not always reliable) human memory;¹⁶ and thenceforth it became standard practice for an author to have at least one copy made of his works, to ensure that later performances might have the benefit of an authentic text. Such authentic texts might be preserved by a guild of singers who had a special respect for the author (this is, I believe, the most probable explanation of the Homeridae), or by dedication at a shrine (as in the case of the very ancient copy of the *Works and Days* seen by Pausanias on Mt. Helicon—Paus. 9.31.4; it was engraved on lead plates, and was therefore presumably the equivalent of what we should call “a library edition,” comparable perhaps with the chained books of late mediaeval and Renaissance libraries). But it must be emphasized that even alphabetic writing is a laborious process, and that writing materials cannot have been cheap in the seventh century (even in the fifth a new papyrus roll cost 2 dr.),¹⁷ so that even if there had been a public for written literature (as distinct from audiences for more or less formal recitations), it is unlikely that a text of the *Iliad*, or even of the *Epodes* of Archilochus, could have been produced for public sale. The author himself, or his authorized representative(s), would have a copy; and how absolute property in such a copy was felt to be can be seen from the story, already known to Pindar (fr. 265 Snell²), of how Homer dowered his daughter with the *Cypria*, or from the stories about Homer’s relations with Creophylus. Such stories suggest that the author was confident that there was no other copy of the poem in existence, and that the exclusive right of recitation thus conferred might prove a fairly valuable endowment.

The preservation of the works of most of the lyric poets presents as yet unsolved difficulties. Religious poems, like those of Alcman, may have survived thanks to the relative permanence of temple organizations (the copies were perhaps dedicated, and stored in the temple treasury); but what about personal poetry like that of Alcaeus or Sappho, and the purely secular poems of a Solon or a Stesichorus? Where did something like 15,000 lines (twenty-six books all told, according to Suidas) of Stesichorus’ poetry remain preserved until it turned up in the Alexandrian library? This is a more difficult case than those of the other three: Solon’s family was still in high regard at Athens in the fourth century (Plato was his collateral descendant), and a family muniment room is not in this case

¹⁶Of the unreliability of the human memory there are good examples in A. B. Lord, *The Singer of Tales* (above, note 13) Ch. 2, especially pp. 26–27.

¹⁷Length unknown, but it is unlikely to have been long enough to hold more than a few books of the *Iliad* at the longest.

unthinkable; the same may apply to Alcaeus and Sappho, and in Sappho's case at least there is a possibility that the poems which she wrote to or for others may have been preserved by the families concerned. None of these things applies, so far as we know, to Stesichorus: we know nothing of any descendants that he may have had after the flesh, and (more important) nothing of the occasions for which he composed his poems or of the manner of their first or subsequent (if any) performances.¹⁸ Nevertheless the texts survived somehow through the sixth, fifth, and fourth centuries, to be collected, catalogued, and copied in Ptolemaic Egypt.

With the sixth century, however, we have reached the age of the great patrons, especially the tyrants, Cleisthenes of Sicyon (with his rather selective interest in literature as an element in political combinations), Polycrates of Samos, Peisistratus (these are two mentioned by Athenaeus 1.3a as having been early book collectors) and his sons, especially Hipparchus. Unfortunately the only book which we know to have been in the possession of either Polycrates or Peisistratus was that copy of the oracles of Musaeus which Onomacritus was caught interpolating (Lasus of Hermione was the detector of the crime and Hipparchus the avenger of literary purity—Her. 7.6.3); but Ibycus seems to have been in Sicyon for a time before he went to Samos,¹⁹ and Anacreon and he wrote poems for Polycrates, on whose fall in about 522 Anacreon is said to have been brought to Athens by Hipparchus ([Plat.] *Hipparch.* 228b, cf. Her. 3.121)—and it would be unnatural for their poems not to be preserved by the patrons for whom they wrote. Of their contemporaries, Xenophanes and Hipponax perhaps preserved the fashion of an older time, the former apparently playing the part of the Homeric "wandering minstrel";²⁰ while Heracleitus, angular and arrogant as ever, was so confident of his own literary and interpretative powers that he resigned even the dignity which was his hereditary right to devote himself to the study of the Universe²¹—and then published, if that be the proper word for it, the results of his researches in prose so wilfully obscure that no one has since been quite sure of knowing what he meant. This remarkable compilation (doubts have been expressed about whether it was really a book in our sense at all;²² it has been suggested that it may have been a collection of aphorisms, but so is Pascal's *Pensées*, and it would be hard not to call that a book) he is said to have dedicated in the temple of

¹⁸This applies only to his narrative poems, but these were the bulk of his work; for anything we are told about them these may have been purely secular in purpose—mere entertainment, without any ritual connection at all.

¹⁹J. P. Barron, "The Son of Hyllis," (*CR* n.s. 11 [1961] 185–187).

²⁰21 B 8 Diels-Kranz⁵ (Berlin 1934), cf. B 2.

²¹Diog. Laert. 9.6.

²²G. S. Kirk, *Heracleitus: The Cosmic Fragments* (Cambridge 1954) 7–8 and elsewhere (Kirk seems to me unduly sceptical).

Artemis at Ephesus (Diog. Laert. 9.6); and it may be that the realization that in these circumstances many people who were unfit to understand his book would try to read it after he was gone led him to adopt the oracular style which we find in the surviving quotations.

The sixth century is the great age for the development of literary competitions; and it was through these that literature gained its greatest hold on the mass of the Greek people. We know of literary festivals at Delos in the seventh century (*H. Apol.* 149 ff.), and one has been suspected at the Panionion even before that;²³ it seems to have been some sort of competition to which Thamyris was going when he suffered his crippling stroke (*Iliad* 2.599–600)—perhaps funeral games, as is attested for the one occasion on which Hesiod made a sea voyage (across the Euripus to Chalcis, to win a tripod at the funeral games of Amphidamas—*Works and Days* 654–659). More historically, we have Herodotus' reference to the competitions for rhapsodes at Sicyon, which Cleisthenes either abolished or drastically remodelled, at the same time as he transferred the "tragic choruses" from Adrastus to Dionysus (Her. 5.67). In the sixth century there is evidence for competitions of two kinds: one for original compositions, such as that for *τραγῳδοί* at the Great Dionysia at Athens (though the prize was at first awarded only to the *χορηγός*, it was not long before the *διδάσκαλος* was also honoured), and one for executants (not only players of musical instruments, but also reciters of other men's works). This is where the so-called "rhapsodes" come in; they had, it seems, had a competition of their own at Sicyon early in the sixth century, and this was followed by the institution of another similar competition at Athens rather before the middle of the century,²⁴ and a third is known from Plato's *Ion* (530a) to have existed at Epidaurus in the late fifth century. This gives another possible way in which literary texts might be preserved: the prizewinning entries in a competition of the first type might well be preserved in a state record office, and the Hipparchean regulations for the recitation of "the Homeric verses" at Athens, as we know them from fourth-century authorities, imply the existence in the sixth century of a text of these verses so authoritative that it could be imposed on the competing rhapsodes without fear of their refusing to compete if they were denied a chance to insert their own cadenzas (one Cynaethus of Chios seems to have been particularly notorious for his insertions into the Homeric text, but there were certainly others not much less pernicious).²⁵

At the beginning of the fifth century we already begin to see evidence

²³H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge 1952) 2–6.

²⁴*JHS* 78 (1958) 38–39. There seems to have been a considerable reorganization under Hipparchus, perhaps about 530.

²⁵*TAPA* 86 (1955) 1–21; *A Companion to Homer* (London 1962) 231, n. 20.

of the concentration of literary interest on Athens: other centres of literary production become less and less important, and the influence of Athens and her competitions becomes increasingly strong; even so apparently independent a figure as Pindar is alleged to have been criticized by Corinna for his "Atticism,"²⁶ and it is not much to be wondered at that most of the literary production of the early years of the century was either aimed at, or at least strongly influenced by, the supposed tastes of the Athenian public. One would expect Pindar to be freest of this—so far as our evidence goes, he wrote little for Athenians—and the new position of the professional poet, not tied any longer to a particular patron but writing on commission for fees,²⁷ should have ensured his independence of current literary fashions. It is at this period, too, that we begin to see pictures of books on Attic vases;²⁸ either we have authors, such as Sappho, with their own books, or school-masters with pupils and texts. These books are, of course, rolls, and in Sappho's case the lines of writing are arranged in columns, as in later papyrus texts, with the writing running parallel to the long axis of the roll; the schoolmaster's book, which seems to contain a corrupt text, has the writing at right angles to the long axis, as in a mediaeval pipe roll—but there is no reason to think that books were yet in general circulation. Protagoras either read his work *On the Gods* to a private audience, or got someone else to read it for him (the date should be before 458);²⁹ the opening scene of the *Parmenides* includes a description (127a–d) of the arrival of Parmenides and Zeno at Athens for the great Panathenaea (probably that of 450, to judge by Socrates' age) with a new book of Zeno's to be read and discussed; and in the *Phaedo* (97b–c) we are told that Socrates acquired his knowledge of the philosophical system of Anaxagoras by hearing someone (perhaps Archelaus, who had been Anaxagoras' pupil and is said to have been Socrates' teacher) reading from a book. Not many years before (perhaps about 456) we have Aeschylus' reference to *μνήμονες δελτοὶ φρενῶν* (*PV* 789),³⁰ where the use of *δελτοὶ* seems particularly significant; we may

²⁶This story has been doubted, on chronological grounds, by D. L. Page, *Corinna* (Hellenic Society Supplementary Paper 6, London 1953) 71 ff. and others. Now that a parallel for one of the oddest of Corinna's metres has turned up in Anacreon (*POxy* 2321, cf. *CR* n.s. 6 [1956] 13) I am even more doubtful about the late dating of Corinna than I was before (*CR* n.s. 5 [1955] 34).

²⁷This is said to have been introduced by Simonides, and the scholiasts to Pindar will have it that Pindar's frequent sniping at the men who made the Muse a worker for hire is mainly directed at Simonides and Bacchylides; but the scholiast on *Nem.* 5.1a (3.89 Drachmann) gives Pindar away—his charge for that ode was 3,000 dr.

²⁸E. G. Turner, *Athenian Books in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.* (Inaugural Lecture, London 1951), and bibliography there (especially page 13, note 3).

²⁹For the chronology of Protagoras's life, see *TAPA* 80 (1949) 73–77, 81–87; *CQ* n.s. 3 (1953) 31–38.

³⁰Cf. also *PV* 460–461: *γραμματῶν τε συνθέσεις, μνήμην ἀπάντων, μουσομήτορ' ἐργάνην* for the value of writing as a substitute for memory.

probably compare the position at Athens about 450 B.C. with that at Oxford in Chaucer's time—the professional student (“clerke”) might have a small library of his own, but much of it probably consisted of notes on his master's lectures.

And here it may be as well to pause and reflect on the question of reading, the problem of which is clumsily but effectively expressed by Anthony Trollope in *The Claverings* (originally published in 1867):

Men and women say that they will read, and think so—those, I mean, who have acquired no habit of reading—believing the work to be, of all works, the easiest. . . . Given the absolute faculty of reading, the task of going through the pages of a book must be, of all tasks, the most certainly within the grasp of the man or woman who attempts it! Alas, no;—if the habit be not there, of all tasks it is the most difficult. If a man have not acquired the habit of reading till he be old, he shall sooner in old age learn to make shoes than acquire the adequate use of a book. [Ch. xlv; World's Classics edition, p. 473]

That Trollope's distinction between “the adequate use of a book” and “the absolute faculty of reading” expresses a fundamental truth, no one who reads these pages will doubt. Many people who can “read written hand” (a far more advanced stage in the art of reading than to be able to read “printing letters”) will not read even print if they can possibly help it; and even vital notices may well go unread because they do not look interesting. There was, I imagine, more public reading matter in fifth-century Athens relatively to the population than there has been in any society since the fall of Athenian democracy; but I wonder how many people read the Periclean inscriptions which modern epigraphists would “give their ears” to be able to copy. But however little of these inscriptions or anything else the average Athenian read, if he cared about literature or music at all, he took them in through the ears, and in concentrated doses such as would stagger even the most persistent seeker after culture at the Edinburgh festival to-day.

Indeed, as we have already seen in the case of Zeno, there was evidently a considerable amount of “fringe” activity (to use the current festival jargon) even at the Panathenaea, which made much of literature officially;¹ and literary fringe activities were even more important at Olympia, if we may judge by the stories of the Olympic activities of Herodotus, Hippias of Elis, and Gorgias. And here I wish to anticipate a little: when Thucydides contrasts the permanence of his own work with the ephemerality of an unnamed, but none the less easily identifiable, predecessor's ἀγώνισμα ἐς τὸ παραχρῆμα ἀκούειν, he does not mean that Herodotus wrote to win a prize in a competition, but that he wrote a work to be read (at least in snatches) at an ἀγών (Olympia, Delphi, the Panathenaea for examples), and that people who were bored with the official programme might go to the literary man's booth, listen for a while and then go away again. Such a work can, in Thucydides's opinion,

¹See *JHS* 78 (1958) 23–42 (especially 33 ff.); and an article in the forthcoming number, 82 (1962).

be no more reliable than the Homeric epic was in Hesiod's (or even in Thucydides' own) eyes; the author, depending on public favour, is bound to sacrifice (as Thucydides, *ex hypothesi*, never did: "What, never?" "We-ell, hardly ever!") the harsh rigour of truth to τὸ προσαγωγότερον τῇ ἀκροάσει; else how will he get the hat filled when he passes it round? We shall return to Thucydides later, and perhaps see why he felt he could take this high-handed line with his predecessors.

From Socrates the listener to other people's readings we may now turn to Socrates and his pupils, as described by Xenophon in the *Memorabilia* (1.6.14), "unrolling the treasures of wise men of old, which they wrote in books and bequeathed to us" and picking out anything good which they come on; this picture, I should be inclined to suggest, comes from the period before (or round about) the time of the production of the *Clouds* (423), and presents a type of Socratic activity which was understandably unfamiliar to Plato (born in 427), but which might correspond better with Aristophanes' picture of Socrates than do most of the other things which we are told about the pre-Platonic Socrates. The Socratic problem is clearly ἀλλης σκέψεως; but the evidence of the master's growing interest in books corresponds to what we know of the development of literacy at Athens from other sources: the coming of a reading public and the development of an actual trade in books.

So far, such evidence for reading as we have had has been that of professional students, and this type of reading of course persists; but the earliest evidence known to me for reading as a pastime is to be found in a fragment of Euripides' *Erechtheus*:

Let my spear lie for spiders to spin a thread about it, and may I share my house in tranquillity with grey-haired Age; may I wreath my grey head with garlands and sing as I hang up a Thracian targe on Athena's colonnaded chambers, and may I unfold the voice of the tablets which wise men recite. [Fr. 370 Nauck; from Stobaeus]

Home is the soldier, home from the wars; and out he takes his book and sits down to read it. But not yet, I think, a proper book bought from a bookseller and containing a single work; it seems rather to be a commonplace book, in which he has written out *ρήσεις* (of better poets, it may be hoped, than Morsimus) and such other things as he did not trust his memory to retain; that he obviously reads his extracts aloud (γῆρως) is not to the purpose—like Dionysus on shipboard (*Frogs* 52–53) he reads the words *to himself*—and so we see (in Euripides, appropriately enough) the first true bookworm in literature, the man who reads for pleasure and as a relief from the harsh realities of war. Where such men accumulate, memories may decay; but booksellers flourish.

(To be continued)



Literature and Literacy in Ancient Greece: II. Caging the Muses

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LITERATURE AND LITERACY IN ANCIENT GREECE

J. A. DAVISON

II. CAGING THE MUSES

THE FIRST appearance in literature, in the fragment of the *Erechtheus* of Euripides discussed at the end of the first part of this paper (*Phoenix* 16 [1962] 156), of the man who looks forward to drowning his sorrows by reading, is naturally followed by the appearance of the bookseller. The earliest dateable reference to a booksellers' quarter in any Greek city is in the *Birds* of Aristophanes, produced in 414; from line 1288 of that play it seems that the stock in trade must have been at least partly provided by the Athenian equivalent of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (decrees are expressly mentioned as forming part of the mental *pabulum* available there).¹ At about the same time, though the references are not exactly dateable, bookshops are mentioned by the comic writers Aristomenes (fr. 9), Eupolis (fr. 304), Theopompus (fr. 77), and Nicophon (fr. 9 Edmonds = 19 Kock); Eupolis speaks of the place "where books are to be bought," and the others actually use the word βιβλιοπώλης—it may be assumed that the human prototypes of Aristophanes' Dionysus (*Frogs* 52–53) acquired their copies of the *Andromeda* and other books for shipboard reading from these booksellers. Negatively we may suppose that the outbreak of the war with Athens had starved Syracuse intellectually, by cutting off the supply of play-books, and that it was this which made recitations from Euripides worth a soldier's ransom (Plut. *Nic.* 29). This suggestion is not entirely fantasy, since by 401 the book trade with the Black Sea cities was so active that Xenophon (*Anab.* 7.5.12–14) could include crates of books among the wreckage of ships washed ashore at Salmydessus (already notorious as a maritime graveyard more than a century earlier).² By the end of the fifth century, then, bookselling had become an export industry; and it is time for us to look at some of the consumers of the products of the industry (we cannot look at the products themselves yet, though a specimen is not far away).

As might have been expected, the first of our bibliophiles is Euripides. His books are a joke to Aristophanes in the weighing scene of the *Frogs* (1409; is it to be supposed that they, like his tragedies, had died with him?), but his was no doubt primarily a professional library (his lowering treatment for tragedy includes "gruel of babble from out-of-the-way

¹Do these official publications perhaps owe their presence to the fact that Aristophanes regarded them as "strictly for the birds"?

²[Archil.] fr. 79a Diehl; more probably sixth-century, and perhaps by Hipponax.

books"; *Frogs* 943); some of his books were obviously produced on the premises, since Euripides had an apprentice named Cephisophon, who is accused by Aristophanes (fr. 580) of having helped to produce Euripides' tragedies. Euripides' library, then, is on a rather different plane from that of Euthydemus, who is laughed at by Socrates in the *Memorabilia* (4.2) for being more interested in collecting books and in classifying them under their proper headings (which include Medicine, Architecture, Geometry, Astronomy, and 'Παψωδία or narrative poetry) than in absorbing their contents.³ Here are two private libraries of the fifth century, and we may perhaps add a third, though unfortunately we know it only from the list of early libraries given by Athenaeus (1.3a): that of the archon of 403/2, Euclides. It may be that he owes his place in the list simply to his recorded interest in orthography; but it is equally possible that his interest in orthographical questions was aroused by the textual variations presented by the books which he had read.

When we reach the fourth century, we are already in the presence of a literature which is composed for readers and not just to be heard. Thucydides is clearly the most self-conscious (and therefore presumably one of the earliest) of this class, since he composes what he deliberately calls a κτῆμα ἐς αἰεὶ, a book to be preserved for all time, and contrasts it with the festival-pieces of his predecessors which are only for the ear. Plainly it must not be supposed that Thucydides would exclude the possibility of *recitatio* as a means of recommending a newly produced book to the public; such *recitationes* are clearly attested for the early fourth century by the charming story of the recitation arranged by Antimachus of Colophon, which is preserved by Cicero (*Brutus* 191):

nec enim posset idem Demosthenes dicere quod dixisse Antimachum clarum poetam ferunt: qui cum conuocatis auditoribus legeret eis magnum illud quod nouistis uolumen suum et cum legentem omnes praeter Platonem reliquissent, Legam, inquit, nihilominus; Plato enim mihi unus instar est centum milium;

and that the practice was still being continued by other authors almost as verbose as Antimachus is witnessed by the story of Diogenes the Cynic, which is told by Diogenes Laertius (6.38): "When someone was reading a long work and made visible a blank space at the end of the roll, Diogenes cried out, 'Cheer up, my lads: I see land.'" Antimachus' book, it is clear, survived the unfavourable reception given to it by all his friends except Plato; but whether it, or the unidentified book which Diogenes and his companions were so glad to see finished, reached the booksellers' counters we cannot tell, although we know that by the latter

³The attack on writing and reading which Plato puts in Socrates' mouth in the *Phaedrus* (especially 274d-279c) appears to be much more characteristic of Plato's own views than of Socrates'. On Plato's dialogues, see now F. Dirlmeier, *SB Heidelberg*, Phil.-Hist. Kl. 1962, 2. 5-9.

years of the century these counters existed, and were as hospitable to the browser as those of Basil Blackwell: here the key is provided by the story of how the young Zeno of Citium, whose father was well known in Athens as a buyer of books (Diog. Laert. 7.31), was himself reading the second book of the *Memorabilia* in an Athenian bookshop (the date should be just before 300 B.C.), and was thus diverted from his father's export-import trade into the study of philosophy.

We have evidence also of a second-hand book trade, if that be the true explanation of the rather surprisingly low price for which, as Socrates tells his judges in the *Apology* (26d), one can buy the works of Anaxagoras in the *ἀρχήστρα*,⁴ and of two kinds of dealing in rare books. In the first of these cases, we have the alleged purchase by Plato (the story comes from Satyrus, and may therefore have been taken straight over from comedy) of three volumes by Philolaus containing the *δόγμα Πυθαγόρου* (Diog. Laert. 3.9, cf. 8.15); presumably this was the author's own copy and unique. In the second we have the de luxe edition, attested by Lucian's story (58.19) of how Demetrius the Cynic found an ill-educated man in Corinth reading a very beautiful book (evidently Euripides' *Bacchae*); the reader had reached the messenger's description of the death of Pentheus, when Demetrius snatched the book from him and tore it up, saying: "It is better for Pentheus to be torn up once by me, rather than over and over again by you" (the moral, Lucian adds, being that expensive books are no more use to a boor than is a comb to a bald man—and so on).

In these circumstances it is hardly to be wondered at that in the fourth century books became more and more commonplace. Plato's purchase, if it took place at all, must have been for the library of the Academy; such an institution would undoubtedly accumulate a considerable number of books even if there were no settled policy of forming a library (which is scarcely thinkable; it may even be suggested that institutes such as the Academy only came into existence when books became available in quantity and people became interested in their collection, use, and preservation). Other fourth-century Athenian libraries include that left by the seer Polemaenetos to his friend Thrasyllus, who thereupon adopted the mantic profession (Isoc. 19.5); this was obviously a professional's collection, like that attributed by the comic writer Alexis (fr. 135) to Heracles' teacher, Linus: this included Orpheus, Hesiod, Tragedy, Choerilus, Homer, Epicharmus, and Miscellaneous (Heracles particularly liked the cookery books included in this section). Outside Athens, apart from the copy of Philolaus bought

⁴Not, I think, that of the Theatre of Dionysus, but more probably that part of the Agora round which the stands for spectators had been set up before the Odeion was brought into use, early in the fifth century (cf. *JHS* 78 [1958] 34).

by Plato in Sicily and the books collected in Citium by Zeno's father Mnaseas, we have the names of Clearchus, tyrant of Heracleia from about 364 to about 353 B.C., who is said by Photius (*Bibl. cod.* 222) to have been the first tyrant to organize a library, and of an otherwise unknown Cypriot named Nicocrates, who is mentioned by Athenaeus (1.3a; it is possible that we should correct the name to Nicocles, and identify the man with Isocrates' pupil or with the Nicocles, son of Pasicrates, who was presented to Alexander during the siege of Tyre; he was the prince of Soli).

Of the books which were in circulation in the Greek-speaking world in the latter part of the fourth century we have an actual example: the fragment of the *Persians* of Timotheus which was found in Egypt towards the end of last century (there is a facsimile in Wilamowitz's edition [Leipzig 1903], but partial reproductions appear in most books on the subject), and which, from the date of the context in which it was found, is thought to have been buried towards the end of the fourth century. Compared with later Greek papyri the text is markedly irregular: the lines are not set out with any regard for metre, and though the left-hand margin is roughly vertical, the right-hand margin is very irregular indeed; the letters are large and well formed, and the end of the stanzas is marked by very elaborate *corônides*. It is generally thought that this is an example of high quality fourth-century book production; there is no reason to doubt this, but the book certainly produces a somewhat rough-and-ready appearance when contrasted with the beautifully neat and regular products of later scribes (for example, the Hypereides papyrus in the British Museum).

It is not of course accidental that the fourth century is the period when literary critics first become really prominent. One can, it is true, collect quite an anthology of references to the style and content of literary works from authors earlier than Aristophanes; and there are those who regard Theagenes of Rhegium (alleged to have been a contemporary of Cambyses, and the first person to use the term 'Ελληνισμός) as the founder of critical scholarship; it seems that he was the first to pose "the Homeric Question" and that he invented the allegorical interpretation of poetry,⁵ which was much used in the fifth century and later by those who wished to defend the Homeric and Hesiodic poems from the charges of impropriety levelled at them by the puritans from Heraclitus and Xenophanes through Pindar to Plato. This sort of interpretation went on, as one can conveniently see from F. Buffière's *Les Mythes d'Homère* (Paris 1956), to the end of antiquity, and reappears in the sixteenth century in authors such as Chapman, who is now being held up in some quarters as having discovered the true meaning of the

⁵Fragments in Diels-Kranz, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* 1⁵ (Berlin 1934) No. 8.

Odyssey (which, it must be said, has always escaped more accurate translators).⁶ Allegorical criticism may have at times influenced the wording of a text, but the practitioners of this kind of interpretation are more likely to be adepts at "construing through a brick wall," which implies taking the text as it comes and trying to force some sort of sense out of it. From the point of view of the transmission of the original text, therefore, it is probably less disastrous that it should be condemned on moral grounds by a Pindar or a Plato than that it should be accused of not respecting the intelligence of its public—and it is just this more destructive type of criticism which develops in the fourth century, being associated principally with the name of Zoilus of Amphipolis, "the scourge of Homer." The relevant texts will be found in Jacoby's *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker* No. 71; a good example is Zoilus' attack on *Iliad* 5.20 (F 8), where he is reported by the scholiasts (A and B) to have said that it was too ridiculous for Homer to make Idaeus jump from his chariot and try to escape on foot, when he could obviously have escaped much more easily by staying where he was. Replies to this sort of rationalism take up much of the space devoted to the fragments of Aristotle's *Ἀπορήματα Ὀμηρικά* in Rose's edition; and here again I take one example, this time from the B Scholia on *Iliad* 2.183:

He cast away his cloak: It is thought to be improper that Odysseus should throw off his cloak and run in his shirtsleeves through the camp, and especially so in view of Odysseus' supposed character [i.e. as a cool-headed and sensible man]. But Aristotle says that he did it so that the mob would be surprised and turn to look at him and his voice would carry as far as possible, since one man would catch his drift from another; and Solon is said to have done the same thing when he collected the mob about Salamis.

The contrast between these two types of intellectual approach is worth noting: Aristotle's firm grasp of the realities of such a situation (panic in the camp) is truly rational and shows the same sort of appreciation of literary purpose as is enshrined in Dr. Johnson's principle: "To a thousand cavils one answer is sufficient: the purpose of a writer is to be read, and the criticism which would destroy the power of pleasing must be laid aside" (*Life of Pope*). The narrow literalism of Zoilus, on the other hand, is the ancestor of all that disintegrative "Microphilology" which has for far too long disfigured the study of literature among academic persons. The problem is obviously a serious one: if an author really does write nonsense, why bother with him at all? But it is not the most serious problem presented by the increasing circulation of books in the fourth century; if the "higher critic" at times is offended

⁶Cf. G. deF. Lord, *Homeric Renaissance* (New Haven and London 1956), and my notice in *CR* n.s. 7 (1957) 254-255.

by the departures of authors from the narrow path of pedantic logic, the "lower" or textual critic is in far worse case.

Here I make no apology for speaking purely of Homer, though Professor Page's well known book, *Actors' Interpolations in Greek Tragedy*, would justify the inclusion of the great tragedians (with notes, for example, on the end of the *Septem* or of the *Phoenissae*, on the Euripidean *Supplices*, or on the *Iphigeneia in Aulis*). Bad as are the cases of fifth-century writers (whose text, one would think, might have been to some extent protected), Homer's is worse, since there is good reason to think that never in the fourth century was there in general circulation anything which could possibly be regarded as a standard text of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. It is true that the text used by Plato, if we may judge from his quotations,⁷ seems to have tallied reasonably closely with what might be printed in a modern "vulgate" text (not with that of the Oxford or Budé editions, which are deformed by excessive devotion to the Aristarcheanist heresy); but even Plato has his moments of "wildness," owing probably to the regrettable propensity which he shares with other ancient authors for quoting from memory and then not verifying his quotations. Other fourth-century quotations and references, such as those in Aeschines, Aristotle, and Demosthenes, are a good deal farther from the modern norm.⁸ This is really nothing to be surprised at, nor should we be perplexed when we come to the third century and find that, of the earliest surviving texts of Homer fragmentarily preserved in mummy-cartonnages and the like, no two represent precisely the same textual tradition—and none tallies exactly with our idea of the "vulgate." It would indeed be strange if it were otherwise; though it is hardly to be denied that a standard text of the Homeric poems was in official use at the Panathenaea in the fourth century, there is no reason to think that this text was available to booksellers' copyists anxious to produce a text of Homer for sale, or that, if it had been so available, any bookseller would have thought it worth while to send his copyists to consult it. As is still the case with the plays of Shakespeare, each "publisher" of Homer evidently produced his own text, sometimes no doubt with the cooperation of a rhapsode (not, as we shall see, the most reliable of authorities); discrepancies between one version and another did not worry the ordinary reader, whose only concern was to have *a* text, or the bookseller, whose only concern was

⁷See J. Labarbe, *L'Homère de Platon* (Bibl. de la Fac. de Philosophie et Lettres de l'Univ. de Liège 117 [Paris 1949]).

⁸Cf. J. La Roche, *Die homerische Textkritik im Alterthum* (Leipzig 1866)—still the best authority for early Homeric quotations, apart from those in Plato. Aristotle's quotations from earlier writers are now being studied by F. Dirlmeier—see his "Merkwürdige Zitate in der Eudemischen Ethik des Aristoteles" (*SB Heidelberg*, Phil.-Hist. Kl. 1962, 2).

to have a saleable article. There were, of course, even in the fifth century, pedants who thought that they knew what the right text should be; Plutarch records Alcibiades' scorn for the elementary schoolmaster who claimed to have a Homer "corrected" (*διωρθωμένον*) by himself (*Alcib.* 7.1), and *διωρθώσεις* are said to have been made by Antimachus of Colophon, by the younger Euripides (nephew of the tragedian), and by Aristotle—the edition called *ἐκ τοῦ νάρθηκος* which formed part of Alexander the Great's campaign library is said to have been prepared by him. (We may note in passing that Alexander, like King John of England, took his library with him on campaign: Alexander's books included the works of Philistus, plays by Euripides, Sophocles, and Aeschylus, and the dithyrambs of Telestes and Philoxenus—Plut. *Alex.* 8). The value of these *διωρθώσεις* was crushingly assessed by Timon of Phlius, according to an anecdote preserved by Diogenes Laertius (9.113): Aratus once asked Timon how he could obtain a sound text of Homer, and Timon replied, "Only if you chance upon an old copy, and not on those already corrected." It may, I think, be safely assumed that subjectivity was not less rife among these early *διωρθωταί* than it was among their third-century successors at Alexandria, and that their activities only served to make confusion worse confounded. It should, however, be remembered that though Aristotle may have been dangerous as a *διωρθωτής*, it is to him and his pupils that we owe the remedy, since it seems to have been the Peripatetic School which really invented the art of librarianship; Strabo, in a passage which will have to be considered in more detail later (13.1.54, p. 608), tells us that "Aristotle was the first we know of to have collected books and to have taught the Egyptians the arranging of a library." That this is in part one of those *πρῶτος εὑρετής* stories which are apt to gather round famous names, and that the ascription to Aristotle of the first collection of books is false, we have already seen; but that Aristotle and his school were the first people to have a really significant collection of books at their disposal, and that this collection was methodically arranged for the convenience of students, is no more than one would expect of a man with the passion for collecting information, for reflecting on it, and for classifying it which we find in Aristotle. Nor can it be strictly true that Aristotle first taught the Egyptians how to arrange a library, since he was dead before Ptolemy Soter was firmly enough established in his kingdom to start thinking of founding a great research institute (*Μουσείον*); it is said that this foundation was suggested to him by Demetrius of Phalerum, and in any case the main work of collecting books for the library seems to have been done by the agents of Philadelphus and Euergetes in the third century. But before we turn to consider the early history of what Timon disrespectfully called "the Muses' birdcage" (*Μουσέων τάλαρος*; fr. 12 Diels), there are two Athenian topics which call for mention.

Among the activities ascribed to Aristotle, presumably as part of the preparation for his study of the art of poetry, is the preparation of the so-called *Διδασκαλῖαι*, or historical records of the Dionysian festivals at Athens, remnants of which survive in the mediaeval commentaries on Greek drama, in the lexicons, and (perhaps in a re-arranged form) in certain inscriptions, the latest edition of which is to be found in Pickard-Cambridge's *Dramatic Festivals at Athens* (Oxford 1953). These inscriptions, it seems, we owe to the zeal of the orator Lycurgus, a younger contemporary of Aristotle, who rebuilt the theatre of Dionysus, had the records of Athenian dramatic history made public in the most spectacular form, and crowned his work by arranging for a new and official text of the plays of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides to be prepared and laid up in the State Record Office or *Μητροῶν*, among the texts of official documents. It would be interesting to know where the originals from which the new texts were (presumably) copied were found, and in what condition. Were they, for example, autographs (or in Euripides' case perhaps copies in Cephisophon's hand) submitted to the archon in support of an application for a chorus, and retained by the state when the application was granted? And if so, in what alphabet were they written? Would they be in the pre-Eucleidean "Old Attic" alphabet, or in the modern standard "Ionic" alphabet? It is true that there is evidence for the use of the "Ionic" alphabet in Athens before the archonship of Eucleides (403/2); but it does not seem altogether unreasonable to suppose that a text submitted for an official purpose would be required to be written in the official alphabet—and even if there was no such formal requirement, it would be an easy way to start deciding between competing entries by throwing out all those which did not conform to the official orthography. Or did Lycurgus have to go to the "green room" of the theatre, and borrow the prompt copies? That (assuming for the moment that the Lycurgeoan text was the ancestor of our modern texts, which is not at all certain) might account for the actors' interpolations detected by Professor Page and others, though these could be accounted for in another way, which we shall come to when we consider the sources from which the Alexandrian library may have been collected. In any case, Athens will be found to be a key-point in the transmission of fourth-century and earlier Greek texts.

The second Athenian matter which may be mentioned here concerns the work of prose authors, and especially of Aristotle. In his case the fundamental problem is how it comes about that his published works (such as the Dialogues, which were known to Cicero and his contemporaries, and were probably in the Alexandrian library) are almost entirely lost, whereas a great amount of his "esoteric" works (lecture notes and the like) have survived. Our main authorities here are Strabo

(13.1.54), Athenaeus (5.214d) and Lucian (58.4).⁹ Strabo tells us that Aristotle left his books and his school to Theophrastus, and that Neleus of Scepsis (in the Troad), who had been a pupil of both men, inherited the whole library (what became of the school we are not told) and took it home to Scepsis. After that we hear no more of the library until we reach the time just before Sulla took Athens (88 B.C.), when we learn that the tyrant Athenion had among his satellites a certain Apellicon of Teos, a naturalized Athenian citizen who had lived "a rather colourful and acquisitive life" (ποικιλώτατόν τινα καὶ ἀψίκορον ζήσαντα βίον). Among Apellicon's various roles, out of which he had apparently done very well (ἦν γὰρ πολυχρήματος, says Athenaeus), he had been a Peripatetic and had then bought Aristotle's library (from Neleus' heirs?) and many others; he had also in his Autolycean way "sneaked" (the word used is ὑφαιρούμενος) the ancient autograph decrees from the Μητροῶν at Athens, and acquired everything that was ancient and cherished from the other cities. It appears that when Sulla sacked Athens, his booty included Apellicon's library, which he then handed over to Cicero's acquaintance Tyrannio—and hence, it seems, most of the surviving works of Aristotle came at last into the public domain. But Sulla's spoils, if we may believe Lucian, included other texts as well (also from Apellicon's collection?), for Lucian, while illustrating the proposition that neither the possession of books nor the reading of them will be any use unless you understand what you read, tells us that Sulla also brought away from Athens the autograph texts of Demosthenes' speeches and all those works of Thucydides which Demosthenes had copied out eight times. Sulla, it seems, like "the great Emathian conqueror," had at least some feeling for literature—certainly a good deal more than the consecrated brigands of the Fourth Crusade seem to have had for the libraries of Constantinople.

But this has taken us well beyond the proper chronological limits for these articles, and we must return to Alexandria. It must have been early in the third century that Demetrius of Phalerum advised Ptolemy Soter (305–283) to found the Μουσεῖον, and found a receptive hearer. Ptolemy and his successors had the advantage of enormous revenues, and at first their efforts as book collectors seem to have emulated those of the millionaire collector of scarabs in P. G. Wodehouse's *Something Fresh*: Mr. Peters, stirred by the boasting of a friend at their country club, determined that he would have the largest collection of scarabs in the world, and to that end he went out and bought scarabs everywhere. When he had collected thousands and thousands, he showed them to an expert, asking him to throw out "what he felicitously termed 'the dead ones'." As might be expected, the expert threw out practically the whole

⁹I. Düring, "Notes on the History of the Transmission of Aristotle's Writings" (*Göteborgs Högskolas Årsskrift* 56 [1950] 3).

collection, but did grudgingly admit that Mr. Peters had perhaps twenty "really good ones." At this point, Mr. Peters realized that he needed knowledge of the subject as well as a long purse, and set out to make himself an expert. It is with the first stage of Mr. Peters' career as a scarabaeologist that we must compare the book-collecting of the first Ptolemies—it was omnivorous and indiscriminate. There are also analogies to be found between the methods used by the Ptolemies and those used by Renaissance Popes to build up the Vatican Library (although we do not hear of the Ptolemies issuing bulls against book-stealing while at the same time receiving the swag).

The main source, no doubt, from which the Ptolemies collected their books was the ordinary book trade, and here two main sources are mentioned: Athens and Rhodes (Ath. 1.3b). As we have already seen, Athens had had a book trade since the late fifth century, and epigraphical evidence for the continuance of the trade in Hellenistic times is forthcoming in the form of a book list from Peiraeus of the late second or early first century B.C. (*IG*² II-III 2363); Rhodes has not previously been mentioned, but here too a book list has been found which is certainly Hellenistic and seems to have come from a gymnasium. That these were not the only sources can be seen from the various editions of Homer (the so-called editions *κατὰ πόλεις*) which are quoted in the various scholia: of these the Massaliot is the most frequently quoted, but others are mentioned from Chios, Sinope, Argolis, Cyprus, Crete, and Aeolis. Others again are known by non-geographical titles, as "The Cyclic," "The Many-versed," and "The one in the Museum." Whether the book trade was the usual intermediary by which the works of such easily dispersed authors as (say) Sappho and Anacreon were collected, we cannot tell; but there is little evidence, even in the fourth century, for the existence of collected works of such authors (Plato, for example, seems to have known little more of the text of Sappho than Herodotus did—and Herodotus mentions only one or two of her poems). But somehow masses of texts were heaped up very quickly, and not always by the most scrupulous means: a device which recurs in the case of the Vatican library is the borrowing of an ancient book (usually against some kind of security) in order to copy it, after which the borrower sends back the copy and keeps the original at the cost of forfeiting his security (the story goes that Philadelphus borrowed the Athenian copy of the works of the three tragedians against fifty talents caution-money—and then sent back a de-luxe copy in place of the one which he had borrowed).

Temple libraries (as at Delos and Ephesus) are possible sources from which texts might be obtained (Pindar's Seventh Olympian is said to have been engraved on the wall of the temple of Athena Lindia in

Rhodes, and analogies for this are epigraphically attested at Delphi); and one should not overlook the possibility that some authors' works might be preserved either in their own houses (Pindar's, for example)¹⁰ or in family muniment rooms (as in the case of Solon). The texts of most surviving authors can be accounted for in one or other of these ways, but there is one case which I find extremely puzzling: that of Stesichorus. It is said that his works amounted to twenty-six books (perhaps, if one follows the usual standards for poetry, 15,000 lines); and whether one considers the nature of the poems (apparently predominantly secular in occasion) or the extreme scantiness of the surviving fragments and allusions, one is, I think, bound to ask where all this mass of verse could have been preserved between the author's death (about 550 B.C.) and the founding of the great Hellenistic libraries. But answer comes there none—at any rate, to me.

One further (and, I think it will be agreed, rather unexpected) source from which the Ptolemies obtained books, apparently in quite considerable quantities, is mentioned by Galen, in his second commentary on Hippocrates, *Epidemics* 3 (17.1.606 Kühn)—the specific reference is to Euergetes (246–241), but no doubt he was not the first to employ the method:

They say that Ptolemy, King of Egypt, was so ambitious about books, that he ordered the books of all those who arrived at Alexandria by sea to be brought to him; and these he had copied on new papyrus and gave the copies to the owners whose books had been brought to him on their arrival in harbour. The books thus acquired were put away on the shelves, and over them was written the inscription, *Τῶν ἐκ τῶν Πλοίων*.

We do not know of any other case in which this method was employed, but the fact that there was a separate section for them in the library suggests that this rather unexpected use of the Customs service (to-day we are accustomed rather to the reverse process) must have been reasonably productive. The case mentioned by Galen apparently concerns a book which had belonged to an itinerant physician (hardly a ship's doctor);¹¹ the only other case which looks as if it might have been a product of the same method which I can quote is that copy of Gnathaena's *νόμος συσσιτικός καὶ συνουσιαστικός* which Callimachus with characteristic "dead-pan" humour, catalogued in *Πίναξ Γ' Νόμων*, along no doubt with such other legislators as Solon, Charondas, and Zaleucus (fr. 433 Pfeiffer). This perhaps came from a sailor's ditty-box; it looks like a souvenir of a night out in the Peiraeus.

From this point onwards we are reasonably well informed about the

¹⁰See my review of J. Irigoin, *Histoire de Texte du Pindare* (Paris 1952): *JHS* 74 (1954) 194.

¹¹At this point one should probably digress to consider the transmission of the Hippocratic *corpus* in general, but I must frankly confess that this is beyond me.

history of Greek texts. Not only are actual fragments of papyrus rolls written in the third century B.C. and later available in appreciable numbers,¹² but the continuous tradition about scholarly attempts to tidy up the texts of authors, and also to interpret them, begins, to all intents and purposes, with the foundation of the library at Alexandria. But obviously before textual criticism or interpretation could begin, it was necessary to organize and catalogue the Royal acquisitions, and that task alone was a stupendous one. Many of the volumes must have been produced by unpractised hands, and probably lacked anything like a title; dramatic texts may not have indicated the names of the various speakers; and some at least of the texts may well have been written in unfamiliar alphabets (archaic or local), as can, I think, be demonstrated for Sappho,¹³ and in dialects which were no longer spoken in that form in the third century, if they were still spoken at all. Consider, for example, the problem of editing the text of Alcman: there is, in my opinion, good reason to believe that these poems, composed in the Laconian dialect and in the seventh century B.C., reached Alexandria in the orthography of the author's own time, without separate symbols for ϵ , $\epsilon\iota$, η or for σ , $\sigma\upsilon$, ω , but also without the fifth-century h for intervocalic σ or the still later σ for θ . Such a text had to be transcribed into the conventional "Ionic" alphabet, and there is reason to think that at the same time the metagrammatists evolved a conventional "Laconian" orthography which (luckily for us) they did not employ consistently, so that we can still from time to time trace the older orthography under the later metagrammatism (recent editors have tried to eliminate these unfortunate departures from consistency, but they too, again luckily for us, cannot do it in every case).¹⁴

In most of these cases, one may suppose, the librarians were not confused by the existence of variant texts, or at least not to the extent of those hapless men who confronted the section containing epic poetry, when at last all the acquisitions had been sorted out and it was possible to start work on the preparation of a reliable text of Homer. It must be emphasized here, I think, that this was an entirely new problem. Certainly it was not the first time that anyone had felt himself called upon to produce a revised text of Homer; but it was certainly the first time that any reviser had been confronted by such a mass of wildly varying sources for the constitution of his $\delta\iota\omicron\rho\theta\omega\sigma\iota\varsigma$ —the mere subjectivism

¹²See R. A. Pack, *The Greek and Latin Literary Texts from Greco-Roman Egypt* (Ann Arbor 1952) for a list up to 1950/51; supplement for Homer only in W. Lameere, *Aperçus de Paléographie Homérique* (Paris, Brussels, Antwerp, Amsterdam 1960) 255–259.

¹³Cf. G. Zuntz, *MusHelv* 8 (1951) 12–55.

¹⁴See my "Notes on Alcman," (*Proc. IX Internat. Cong. of Papyrol., Oslo 1958* [Oslo 1961]) 39–41.

which might have carried an Antimachus along very nicely, or even what we may feel confident were the more careful methods of Aristotle, would be about as useful to a Zenodotus as the critical methods of a Theobald or a Malone would be to a modern editor of Shakespeare. A completely new technique was obviously needed, and it was a long time before anyone found a clue to this particular labyrinth. But that is another subject;¹⁵ the Daughters of Memory are now caged fast in the *τάλαρος* at Alexandria, and it is time to pause and look back for a moment over the world from which they (and we) have come.

In the first place, it had been for at least four centuries a world in which the elements at least of literacy had been more widely spread among the population than they were from the fall of the western Roman Empire down to quite recent times—a world in which the minimum standard of *μάθησις* was to know your letters (*γράμματα*), to be able to play a simple stringed instrument (*κιθαρίζειν*), and to swim (*νέειν*). These are probably the “three of Stesichorus,” ignorance of which branded a man as *ἀμαθής*¹⁶—and how rare such men were at Athens by the late fifth century may be judged by the fact that even the *ἀλλαντοπώλης* in the *Knights* knows his letters, albeit *κακὰ κακῶς* (188–193). For literary purposes, on the other hand, almost everyone was practically illiterate; that is to say that only those who were concerned with the trade of authorship, among whom I include amanuenses (usually, it may be supposed, apprentices), actors, reciters, and perhaps *χορευταί*, were fully literate and not only possessed “the absolute faculty of reading” but were capable of “the adequate use of a book.” In the latter part of the fifth century the number of these people rapidly increased until it became necessary to organize machinery by which books could be copied and sold to people who were no longer content to wait for the annual Dionysia or Lenaea, or still worse for the quadrennial Great Panathenaea, for their regular ration of new literature. As is still the case to-day, some people went on preferring to use their ears and memories rather than their eyes; but with the coming of bookselling the whole attitude of the author’s public to the question of “publication” takes on a new form: now books have to be written for dissemination to an audience of at least potential readers, and the task of such people must be made as easy as possible—the layout of the page has to be considered, and some help at least must be given to the reader to enable him to grasp the general plan of the book. We have not quite

¹⁵See my chapter on “The Transmission of the Text,” in A. J. B. Wace and F. H. Stubbings, *A Companion to Homer* (London 1962) 215–233 (especially 222–224).

¹⁶This seems to me a more reasonable interpretation of this phrase than the conventional view that Stesichorus “invented” the triadic form for Lyric verse (which involves a denial that Alcman’s triads really are such).

reached the point where authors become conscious of the need to organize their works into standard lengths for publication¹⁷—that seems to be a Hellenistic development, but the booksellers and their copyists are at least beginning to learn their special trades. It would be interesting to know how the discovery of the book as a really saleable article affected the remuneration of authors, but the evidence is lacking—for anything we know to the contrary, Pindar was the last of the “jobbing” poets, and the great Athenian writers of the fifth and fourth centuries show no sign of “writing for bread” (Plato indeed is openly contemptuous of those who take money even for teaching), and there is no suggestion that I can find of any idea that an author might have any property in his writings or of anything like a law of copyright.

It is all important for the student of the history of texts originally composed before the establishment of the book trade to forget all his modern ideas about the nature of publication; the mere fact of reducing a text to writing in this early period has absolutely nothing to do with the later practice of “preparing the text for publication,” and it is useless to argue, as is often done (especially in dealing with Homer or the Lyric poets) that because the Hellenistic “book texts” have this, that, or the other characteristic, this must have been inherited from manuscripts of the pre-Alexandrian era. It is much more useful to consider what happened to English poems which in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries of our era circulated among the members of London society before they reached the printed page (usually without the original author’s permission) in somebody’s *Miscellany* or *Booke of Ayres*; this topic has been studied most helpfully by Mr. J. W. Saunders of the Extra-Mural Department of Leeds University.¹⁸ There, unless you can find the author’s own manuscript, there is no security at all; people copy out the text received, but with all manner of changes and “improvements” (this is particularly the case where someone hears a poem and then writes it down later from memory), and the last state of such a poem may be very different from that in which it left its author’s mind. That rhapsodes and suchlike professional, or semi-professional, performers freely inserted cadenzas of their own in the poems which they recited, we are specifically told (Schol. Pind. *Nem.* 2.1c Drachmann); but we might have guessed as much for ourselves—and the passages in which Aristophanes gives us an idea of what might go on at symposia will remind us that parodies and improvisations on familiar forms must

¹⁷Neither Herodotus nor Thucydides, nor even Plato in the *Laws*, shows any tendency to compose in “books” of a standard length; the book-divisions seem to have been imposed *après coup*.

¹⁸“From Manuscript to Print,” *Proc. Leeds Phil. and Lit. Soc.*, Lit. and Hist. Section 6 (1951) 507–528.

have been as rife in Athens as they are to-day. Thus, although it may be argued that it is possible, by employing the ordinary processes of textual criticism, to reconstruct with a considerable degree of accuracy the Alexandrian text of a Greek author, if we are to go behind this point to (or towards) the pre-Alexandrian text, we must be in a position at least to suggest the source or sources from which the Alexandrians derived their knowledge of the text, and how near these sources stood to the author's original manuscript. My own impression is that in most cases the texts were preserved in circumstances which would guarantee their relative purity (in temples, muniment rooms, state archives, and the like); but this will not apply to collections of drinking songs (such as the Attic *scolia*) or to amorous ditties (such as the Locrian songs); and I am not at all sure that it will apply to such collections as the Theognidean corpus. *Vno itinere non potest perueniri ad tam grande secretum*; no one person, and no single method, can solve this problem, but one may at least help to define its terms and to point out ways by which the solution is unlikely to be found. One of these unhelpful ways, it seems to me, is to assert that there was already one text of Homer in the fourth century which had been so formally declared and recognized to be for all purposes the sole authentic one that every divergent text should be declared to be corrupt. Well on into the Hellenistic period there were many texts of Homer in circulation, and all were equally authoritative (or the reverse) until the Alexandrian critics (on what evidence we are not likely ever to know) straightened out the tangles and produced texts which could be accepted as reasonably authoritative. These texts were then widely disseminated by a book trade which had by this time developed something like a conscience about the quality of the texts which it sold to the public, and which was held more or less in the paths of virtue by the knowledge that the public had learned something of the value of accuracy and wanted texts which were not only readable and intelligible, but as accurate as (under the conditions of manual copying) they could be made. If I had to suggest an approximate date for this development, I should (with the texts of Homer in my mind) put it about the middle of the second century B.C. By then the Greek world had attained to the true aim of literary culture, as defined in my opening quotation; they had "learned to read" in time to teach that knowledge to the Romans—and how apt the Romans were as pupils can be seen by the speed with which Latin literature attained maturity, once that fundamental lesson was learned.